

The Battle of Turak IV

By Enrique Guerrero; Maps by Sterling Hershey

To: Major Arhul Hextrophon, Executive Secretary and Master Historian, Alliance High Command

From: Lieutenant Voren Na'al, Assistant Historian

Regarding: Continuing research into the events surrounding the Battle of Turak IV

"We're asking a lot from Johans' Hammers, but that's why they're here. Besides, to conquer without risk is to triumph without glory and the glory here will be mine!" --Imperial General Maltaz

Sir:

The Battle of Turak IV was the largest Rebel ground assault campaign ever against the Empire. Empowering in its conception. Courageous in its preparation. Catastrophic in its execution. It's with great sympathy that I report to you our costly "victory" at Turak IV. The Imperial Hell's Hammers repulsortank regiment undermined our expectations. After reviewing post-battle analysis, Alliance Intelligence can only characterize the Turak Campaign as a strategic defeat.

Following a series of successful Alliance attacks on Imperial military targets at Aris V and Vohai, Parmel sector had reached its flashpoint. Eighteen months after the Battle of Yavin, with their secret base on Turak IV discovered by Imperial scouts, Alliance Sector Command decided to press their advantage against the incompetent Imperial General Maltaz and strike a ringing blow and rallying cry for the Alliance! But fate intervened through the unexpected arrival of a once legendary Clone Wars-era repulsortank regiment, Hell's Hammers. Under the command of Colonel Zel "Rancor" Johans, the Imperial Hell's Hammers Elite Armor Division devastated years of work by the Alliance in Parmel sector and have established themselves as adversaries to be feared throughout the Outer Rim.

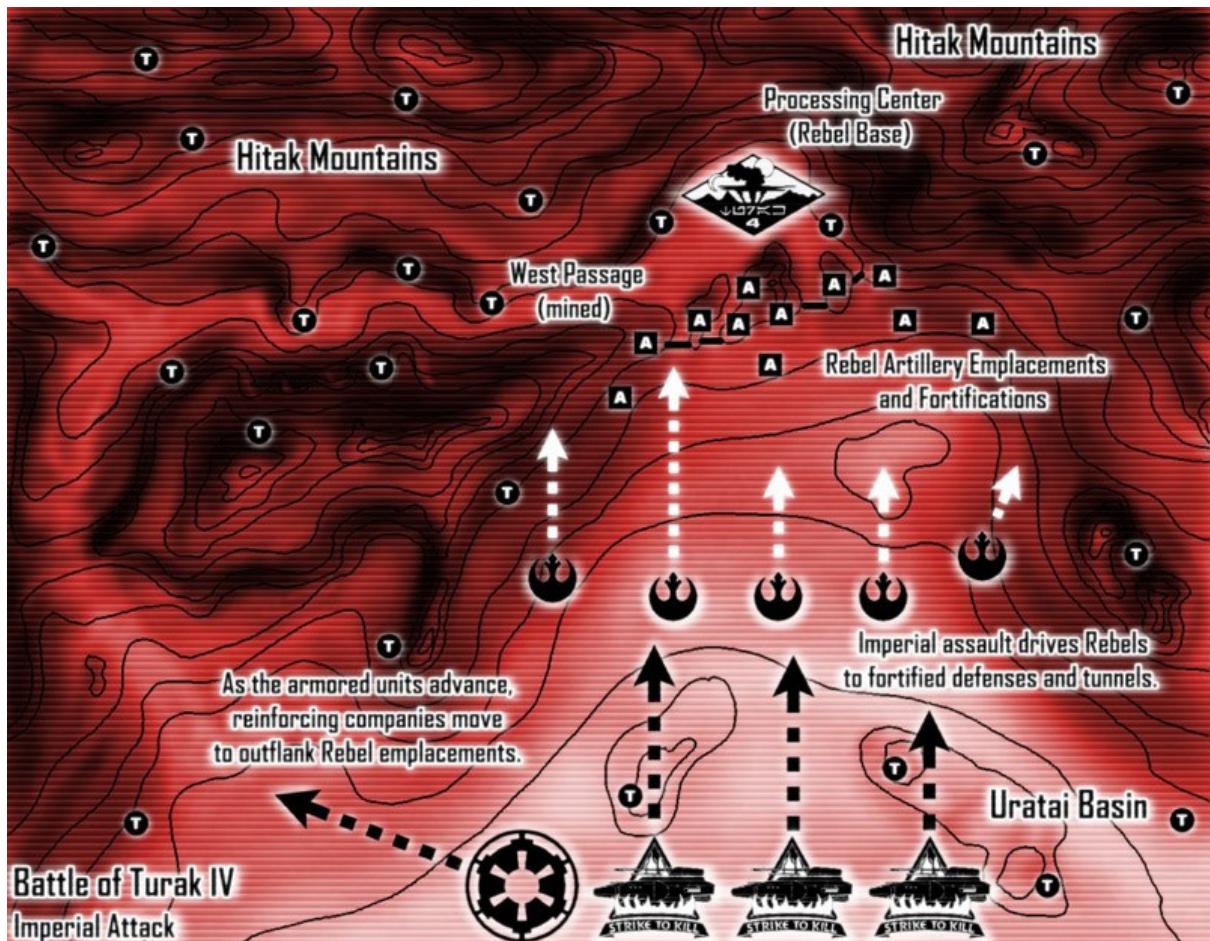
"We controlled both ground and air superiority, or so we thought. Their speed, by the Force, their speed . . . the Hammers destroyed everything we threw at them, overrunning our forward positions, we had no choice but a tactical withdrawal." -- Alliance Commander Torv Keist to Alliance Intelligence during debriefing on the Turak IV Campaign.



Left: Emblem of the "Hell's Hammers" elite Imperial repulsortank unit; Right: Unit patch of the Hitak Harriers Rebel unit.

The following data was related to me from Commander Torv Keist, Hitak Harrier survivor :

The Turak system was an ideal location for Parmel Sector Alliance to build their hidden base. Located in the remote backwater regions of Parmel sector in the Outer Rim Territories, Turak IV was the only planet with a tolerable atmosphere orbiting the Tyas sun in the Turak system. A superheated, volcanic planet with a previous history of mineral resources, Turak IV has long since been abandoned by any industrial efforts, and only occasionally frequented by pirates and scavengers.



Alliance scouts found an abandoned mining complex and Parmel Sector Alliance sent engineers to build an extensive secret Rebel base hidden within the Hitak mountain range bordering the Uratai basin. The entire project took months. The only visible structure was a refurbished mineral processing facility located at the base of the Hitak mountains. To protect the exposed base from orbital bombardment, Alliance engineers installed a planetary shield and power generator making any enemy assault possible only by land. Our exposed base was accessible from only two directions, but engineers mined the narrow western corridor and installed a series of fortifications and artillery batteries facing the vast southern lava plains. If the Imperial scout ship detected anything, it was our visible base in the Uratai basin.

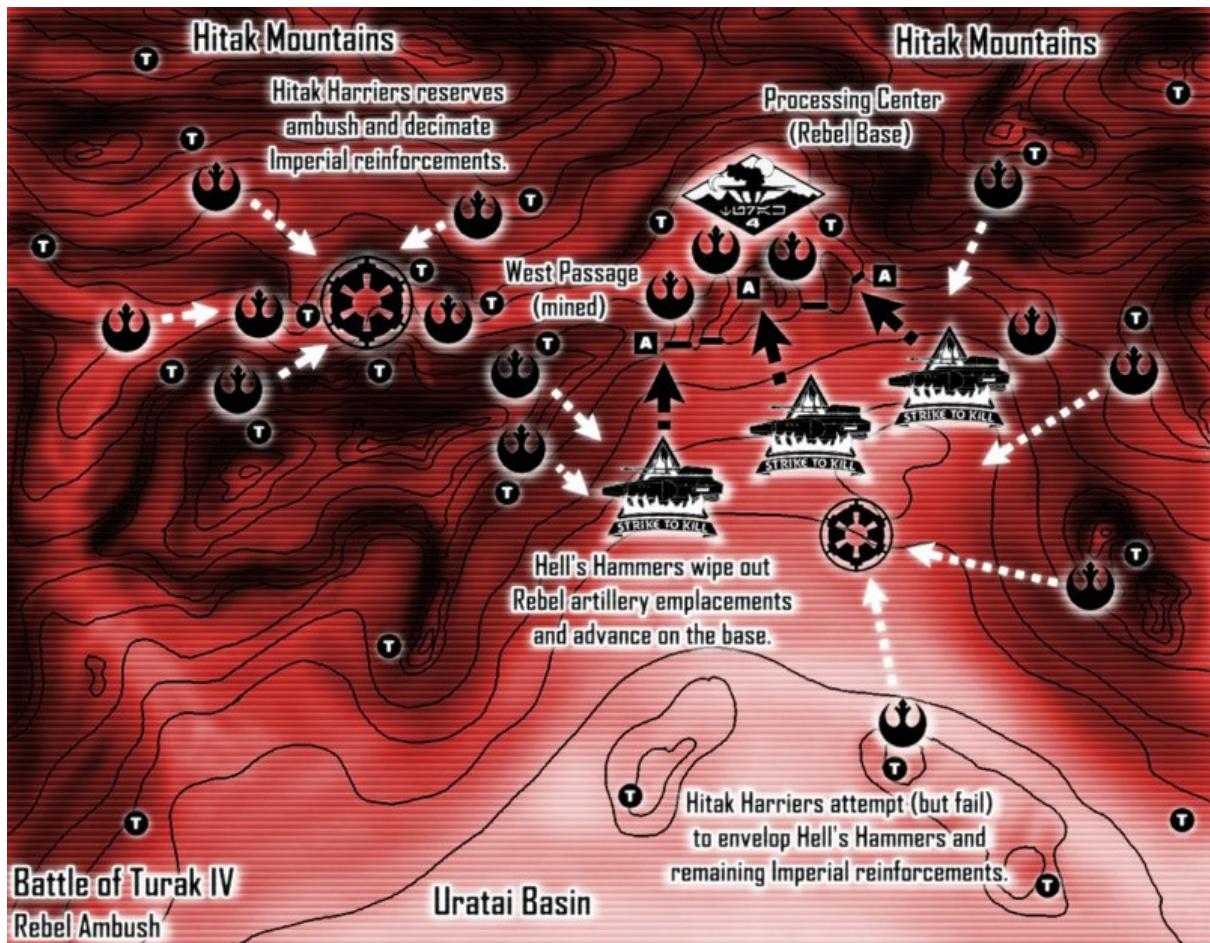
"Better one big enemy that you can see than many small ones that you can't" -- Mandalorian proverb.

We were certain that Moff Tallis and General Maltaz were unaware that we had been smuggling materials and equipment onto Turak IV ever since the destruction of the Death Star. We dubbed ourselves the "Hitak Harriers" and prepared for the obvious attack on our Uratai Basin Base. Defended by two thousand and two hundred troops and further reinforced by over three hundred armored assault vehicles including Kelliak Arms & Armor Company Freerunners, Rothana Heavy Engineering TX-130S and TX-130T fighter tanks, and a variety of modified groundcars, landspeeders, combat tramp shuttles and armored repulsorcraft, we knew Maltaz would be unprepared for our numbers.

As an additional safeguard, secreted within the hidden bases in the surrounding mining tunnels to the west and the south, Parmel Sector Alliance held in reserve another four thousand and six hundred troops complemented by mobile artillery, nine squadrons of modified combat airspeeders and three squadrons of short range attack ships.

As expected, General Maltaz landed a full Imperial assault regiment south of our position consisting of four battalions of stormtroopers and army infantry, including two battalions of the Hell's Hammers Armored Division. Intel from our scouts revealed that we still outnumbered the Imperials by a five-to-one parity. So we waited, ready to spring our ambush on the invading Imperials. The Uratai base providing an enticing target for a tactical envelopment.

"Plans change on contact with the enemy." -- Widely known military maxim.



When Hell's Hammers attacked, they attacked with a speed and a ferocity that we were not expecting. We had little intelligence on Colonel Johans' battalions, other than knowing that Imperial repulsortanks were becoming less common in conventional war. But we knew Maltaz could be exploited for his mistakes and Maltaz was in command. The Hammers raced towards our outer defenses, brushing aside our ground troops, eradicating our artillery, and shooting down combat airspeeders and low flying starfighters. Unable to push back Hell's Hammers, we withdrew towards the Uratai Base, and braced for the Imperial reinforcing battalions to charge through our weakened lines. But the Imperial reinforcements never arrived, allowing our enveloping forces to surround the Hammers.

"You will hold your position, Colonel Johans! The Rebel scum are outnumbered. You have two companies in reserve. I'll take the remaining regiment and flank the Rebels from the west. I will be the hammer to your anvil!" -- General Maltaz to Colonel Johans

General Maltaz took the remaining Imperial regiment into the western corridor where they were trapped and decimated by our reserve forces. We thought this turn of events would preserve our victory. It didn't. By the end of the battle, we were reduced to a one-to-one parity with the Imperials, mostly under the protection of the surviving Hammers on the southern plains.

Orders went out immediately for evacuation, and the arrival of Alliance naval forces provided the protection we needed to escape the Imperial capital ship and its TIE fighters before Moff Tallis could send additional reinforcements.

The following research I uncovered from the Halowan trans-data library:

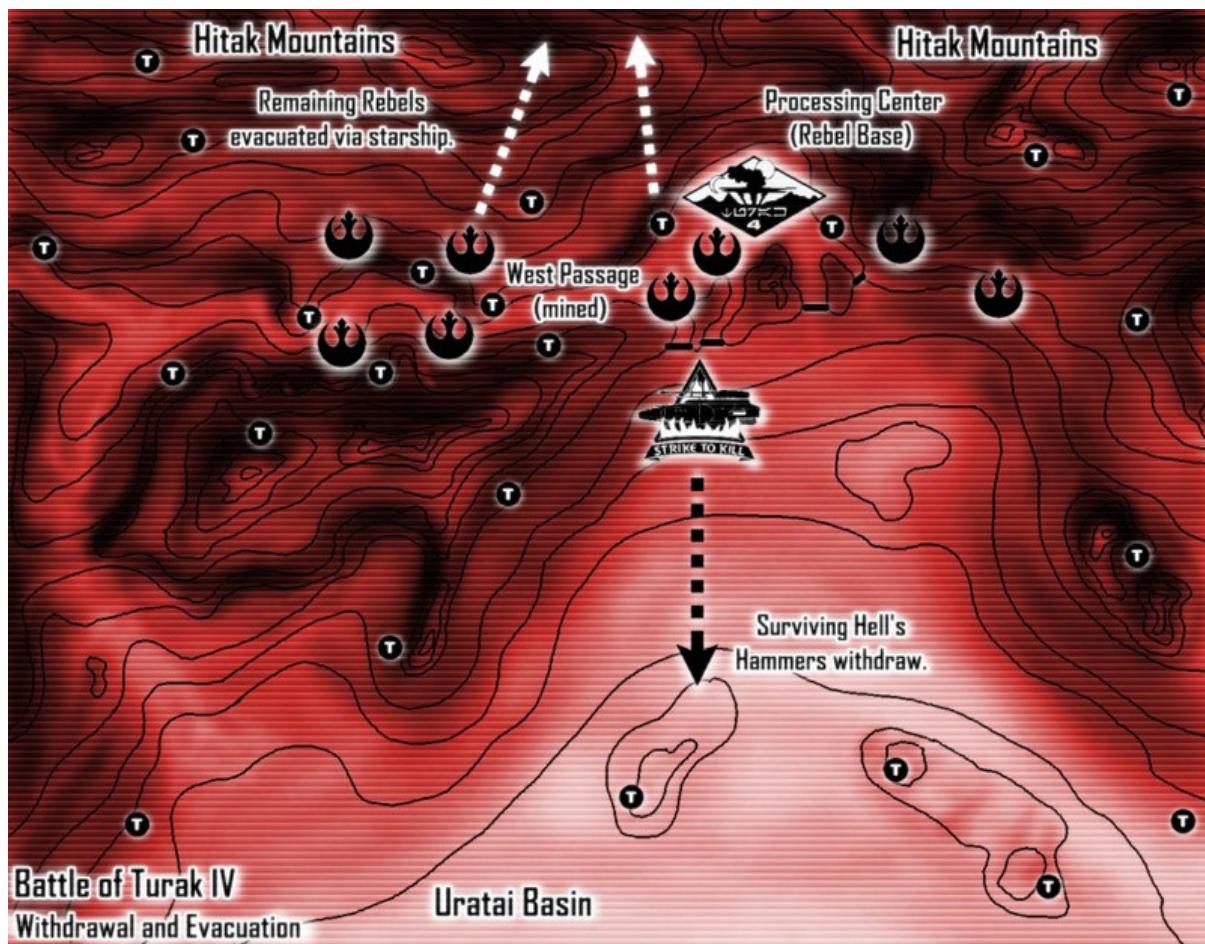
Posing as a special agent of Fakir sector's Moff, I bypassed the security forces on Halowan and gained access to restricted Imperial files. Accessing data on the Battle of Turak IV, I learned that nearly General Maltaz' entire assault regiment, including the two battalions of Hell's Hammers Armor Division, were destroyed. In addition to the Imperial survivors who sought refuge with Hell's Hammers, only three tanks from Colonel Zel "Rancor" Johan's battalion command survived. Intelligence gathered from TIE fighter patrols surveying the combat zone reported large numbers of Rebel assault vehicles and starfighters scattered across the plains in front of the Hammers' positions. Although suffering the loss of two entire Hell's Hammers battalions, the cost to the Rebel

Alliance was even higher. Living up to their motto of "Strike to Kill," the effectiveness of Hell's Hammers against superior odds raised their reputation as an Elite Armor Division and became a source of pride to both Hell's Hammers and the Imperial Army.

Clearly, the arrival of Hell's Hammers was a disastrous development for Parmel Sector Alliance. After discovering the location of the Rebel base on Turak IV, Moff Tallis authorized General Maltaz to lead the Imperial assault regiment, designated Battle Group Turak, to eradicate the Rebels. However, Tallis also requested that two battalions of the Hell's Hammers be transferred by Imperial Central Command to Turcan III and assigned to Battle Group Turak.

"Anything described as an 'easy mission' is probably an ambush." -- Lesser-known SpecForce maxim.

Under Maltaz's orders, Hell's Hammers engaged the Rebel Base from the south, effectively destroying all fixed Rebel artillery, pushing back the Alliance troops and securing their forward positions. Awaiting support from reinforcing infantry, General Maltaz took six out of the eight remaining companies from the two reinforcing battalions and moved them west, intending to flank the Rebel base from behind the mountainous ridges and through the exposed narrow pass. Once Maltaz broke his regiment into two forces, the Hitak Harriers sprung their trap, launching wave after wave of Rebel forces counter-attacking from hidden bases high in the volcanic Hitak mountains. Destroying their reinforcing companies, Hell's Hammers were cut off by the Rebels and found their entire force of one hundred and four Ubrikian Imperial repulsor tanks and Gorm Talquist S-1 "Firehawk" heavy repulsor tanks surrounded.



Underestimating the size of the Rebel forces, General Maltaz ordered the Hammers to hold their positions, and pushed forward hoping to seize the Rebel base. Caught between the mined western corridor and unable to rejoin Hell's Hammers forward positions, the remainder of Maltaz' command found themselves heavily outnumbered and subject to concentrated attacks by armored Rebel assault vehicles, starfighters and ground forces. Equally outnumbered, the Hammers suffered heavy losses but inflicted four times the damage on their attackers. By the time the order came to withdraw, there were few Hammers left to receive it.

The Battle of Turak IV is currently viewed as Hell's Hammers only major defeat, however, the Battle of Turak IV served as a propaganda victory for the Empire, raising Hell's Hammers accomplishment there to a legendary

status. A major threat to Alliance interests throughout the Outer Rim, Imperial Central Command has reassessed Hell's Hammers, determining the Division to be crucial to suppression efforts, and has issued an order to rebuild Hell's Hammer Elite Armor Division to full regimental strength, granting Colonel Zel "Rancor" Johans' first class priority for fire support, material and troops.

"The Empire can always muster superior numbers, and those forces almost always have superior equipment and superior training. So don't get into a slugging match with the Empire, they'll win every time. Generally, Alliance ground troops will win through careful choice of mission objectives, guerilla tactics, and bravery under fire. If you can't achieve your objectives quickly, against little opposition, you probably can't achieve them at all." -- General Crix Madine advising Alliance High Command

A pivotal battle early in the war with the Empire, the Battle of Turak IV demonstrated convincingly that Alliance forces should not engage in conventional war with Imperial units. Although a victory for the Rebel Alliance, it broke the back of the Allied resistance in Parmel sector for years.

Enrique Guerrero is an attorney and freelance journalist from California who has worked with LFL over the past ten years, helping navigate the New Jedi Order and Dark Nest Trilogy storylines, while contributing to materials published by Del Rey, Dark Horse Comics and Paizo Publishing. When not cruising the hyperspace lanes looking for obscure Star Wars details, he's often teaming up with his wife, Francine, chasing down their one-year-old, and encouraging him not to use the Force on the family room. Enrique and Francine are looking forward to their second young Padawan this November.